



## **Supreme Court of Illinois**

June 5, 2017

### **SUPREME COURT JUSTICES TO ATTEND UNVEILING OF HISTORICAL MARKER FOR SCOTT BIBB IN ALTON**

A State Historical Marker will be unveiled in Alton on Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup> to honor Scott Bibb, an African American who successfully fought in the Illinois Supreme Court for the desegregation of schools in what became known as the Alton School Cases in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Supreme Court Justices Anne M. Burke and Rita B. Garman will be attending the dedication ceremony. Also attending are John Lupton, Executive Director, Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, and members of the Historic Preservation Commission Advisory Committee; Justice Joy V. Cunningham, Hon. Neil Cohen, and Scott Szala, J.D.

With the assistance of Lewis and Clark Community College, the Illinois State Historical Society sponsored and erected the historical marker. The Society maintains markers statewide regarding subjects of historical significance to Illinois.

"In recent years, the Illinois Supreme Court through its Historic Preservation Commission has undertaken an effort to bring Illinois' history to life," Illinois Supreme Court Justice Rita B. Garman said. "We have explored the life of Mary Todd Lincoln and the Mormon experience in Illinois. The program on the Alton School Cases has made people throughout the state aware of the courage and dedication of Alton's Scott Bibb. I am honored to have been invited to the dedication ceremony and to have the opportunity to speak to the Alton community about one of its great heroes."

Born in 1855, Bibb was a fireman in the Alton Glass Works factory and attempted to send his children to school in 1897 only to be told his children would have to attend a segregated school for African American children despite an 1874 law which called for an end to segregation of all public schools. Bibb served as plaintiff in a lawsuit and won five appeals in the Illinois Supreme Court overturning the lower court's decisions, but Alton officials including the mayor and superintendent of schools refused to comply with the court's orders.

In 1908, after the last ruling in his favor by the Illinois Supreme Court, Bibb's by-then-adult-aged children briefly attended the school to which they had been denied access in 1897 but left after several weeks. Alton schools remained segregated until the 1950s.

The dedication ceremony will be held at the Scott Bibb Center, 1005 East Fifth Street in Alton at Lewis and Clark Community College, which in 2015 hosted one of three reenactments of "History on Trial: Alton School Cases", sponsored by the Illinois Supreme Court Historic

Preservation Commission. Each of the 2015 programs featured a panel discussion following the reenactment. Panelists consisted of historians and legal professionals to discuss the evolution of the law and lawsuits concerning the prevention of school segregation in the state.

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